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Washington, D.C. 20505

Executive Registry

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Dear Frank,

I enjoyed seeing you at  as well.

You asked for comments on the speech you are going to give at the Chamber of Commerce conference. As I'm not a policymaker, let me confine my remarks to the CIA.

The statement that there is "no effective CIA" is inaccurate. The CIA is probably stronger today than it has ever been, if you use the indices of our ability to collect information--both technically and through human means--and our having the intellectual talent and depth of experience to analyze it well. Unquestionably, the investigations, the publicity and the new ground rules have forced us to change some of the ways we operate. That adjustment has affected morale and tested our flexibility, but it has not diminished our capability. It is true that some restrictions have proven to be in excess of what is really needed to ensure adequate control and oversight. Conceivably, they could adversely affect our capabilities over the long term. However, both the President and the Congress are moving to remove some of these restrictions and to restore the balance between necessary controls and necessary freedom to operate. So, the future looks bright.

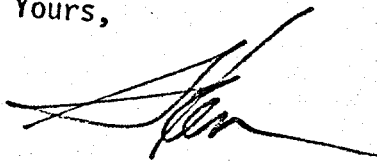
The recent past, however, has not been dim. You state that if we had had an effective CIA we would have known about Iran and Afghanistan before they happened. I would contend that we did know. Here the problem is one of expectations. Intelligence should and does keep the policymaker informed of the trend of activities in a country, dissident factions and problems, over years rather than days. In this way, intelligence can provide a sound basis for long-term American policy. The CIA has performed extremely well in this regard. No one can forecast to the hour events which come as a surprise even to the principals involved. The fall of the Shah and the coalescence of disparate factions around a 79-year old expatriate was unforeseeable even to those in Iran until it was actually happening. As you know, it's virtually impossible to predict our own election results with certainty, even though everyone has full access to all pertinent information.

*Jameson*

I realize that your statements about the CIA are designed to help us, and I certainly appreciate that. But, it would be more helpful, rather than characterizing American intelligence as being ineffective--which it is not--if you stress the importance of public and press support of the measures which the President and the Congress are now taking. Reasonable charters will provide specific authorities for the CIA's work as well as limitations, and the codification of the oversight mechanism. Legislation to protect the identities of our people and relief from the Freedom of Information Act will help us to ensure our effectiveness, and protect national security information better.

I wish you well with the talk and look forward to seeing you again.

Yours,



STANSFIELD TURNER

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Mr. Frank Gard Jameson